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## Box Patent Application

Assistant Commissioner for Patents  
Washington, DC 20231

Presented for filing is a new original patent application of:

Applicant: KNUT GRIMSRUD AND AMBER D. HUFFMAN

Title: READING DATA FROM A STORAGE MEDIUM

Enclosed are the following papers, including those required to receive a filing date under 37 CFR 1.53(b):

	<u>Pages</u>
Specification	12
Claims	8
Abstract	1
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Drawing(s)	6

### Enclosures:

- Assignment cover sheet and an assignment, 2 pages, and a separate \$40 fee.
- Postcard.

Basic filing fee	\$760
Total claims in excess of 20 times \$18	\$180
Independent claims in excess of 3 times \$78	\$234
Fee for multiple dependent claims	\$0
Total filing fee:	\$1174

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Page 2

A check for the filing fee is enclosed. Please apply any other required fees or any credits to deposit account 06-1050, referencing the attorney docket number shown above.

If this application is found to be incomplete, or if a telephone conference would otherwise be helpful, please call the undersigned at (858) 678-5070.

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Respectfully submitted,



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APPLICATION  
FOR  
UNITED STATES LETTERS PATENT

TITLE: READING DATA FROM A STORAGE MEDIUM  
APPLICANT: KNUT S. GRIMSRUD AND AMBER D. HUFFMAN

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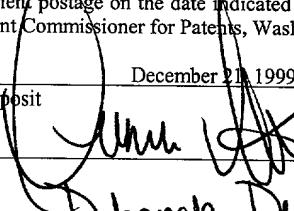
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READING DATA FROM A STORAGE MEDIUM

Background of the Invention

5        This invention relates to reading data from a storage medium.

When reading data from a storage medium, such as a hard disk, a host driver reads the requested data, called "demand data", along with data from other locations on the  
10      hard disk. The data from the other locations is called "prefetch data" and corresponds to addresses on the hard disk that are likely to be read next by the host driver.

Summary of the Invention

In general, in one aspect, the invention is directed  
15      to reading data from a storage medium. The invention features reading data on the storage medium in response to a command, storing the data in a region of memory, and issuing an interrupt after a predetermined portion of the data has been stored in memory.

20       Among the advantages of the invention may be one or more of the following. The interrupt may be used to indicate that the predetermined portion of data has been read/stored. This data can then be processed without

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waiting for additional data to be read/stored. Thus, data from two (or more) locations of the storage medium can be read and processed separately using a single "read" command. This is particularly advantageous if the data at one such 5 location is prefetch data, since processing of the data from the other location (demand data) would otherwise be held up unnecessarily to wait for the prefetch data to be read.

Other features and advantages will become apparent from the following description and the claims.

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#### Brief Description of the Drawings

Fig. 1 is a block diagram of a disk drive and a host processing device.

Fig. 2 is a flow diagram showing a process for reading data from the disk drive.

15

Figs. 3 and 5 are top views of a hard disk and a transducer head in the disk drive.

Fig. 4 is a flow diagram of an alternative process for reading data from the disk drive.

20

Fig. 6 is a front view of a computer which can function as the host processing device.

Fig. 7 is a block diagram of hardware included in the disk drive and the host processing device.

Description

Referring to Fig. 1, block diagram 10 shows a host processing device 11 reading data from a hard disk 12 of a disk drive 14. Disk drive 14 may reside within host processing device 11 or it may be an external drive.

Software (device driver) 15 executing in host processing device 11 receives commands from applications or other computer program(s) (not shown) executing on host processing device 11. These commands instruct device driver 15 to read data from locations on hard disk 12 of disk drive 14. Data is then transferred from these locations back to device driver 15, which passes it to a Direct Memory Access ("DMA") engine 16 also on host processing device 11. DMA engine consults a table, such as scatter/gather list 27, to determine where in memory 17 to store the received data. Scatter/gather list 27 includes lists of addresses in memory 17 into which data from hard disk 12 is to be stored.

Issuing An Interrupt During Reading

In Fig. 2, a process 19 is shown for reading data from hard disk 12. Device driver 15 receives (201) a command from software on host processing device 11. The command identifies demand data and prefetch data at different addresses (locations) on hard disk 12, and

instructs device driver 15 to read the demand and prefetch data from hard disk 12 on disk drive 14.

Demand and prefetch data are typically contiguous data blocks and the demand data precedes the prefetch data

5 (i.e., the prefetch data is after the demand data) in a direction of movement of hard disk 12. For example, as shown in Fig. 3, hard disk 12 rotates in a direction of arrow 21 during reading. A transducer head 22 on disk drive 14 reads data from channels on hard disk 12 during rotation.

10 Since the transducer head encounters demand data 24 before prefetch data 25 (as a result of the direction of rotation of hard disk 12), demand data 24 is read first. Prefetch data 25 is read on the assumption that the next data that will be read by transducer head 22 will be the data that 15 follows data 24.

Returning to Fig. 2, in response to the command received in 201, device driver 15 reads (202) demand data 24 from hard disk 12 and provides the demand data to DMA engine 16. DMA engine 16 then consults (203) a database, namely a 20 scatter/gather list 26, to determine where to store the data read in 202. Device driver 15 programs DMA engine 16 with scatter/gather list 26 prior to reading data from hard disk 12. Scatter/gather list 26 includes entries which specify destination buffers (regions of memory 17) into which the

demand data and the prefetch data are to be placed. The destination regions of memory may not be contiguous, in which case DMA engine 16 is programmed with multiple entries, one for each discontiguous region.

- 5 DMA engine 16 consults (203) scatter/gather list 26 periodically as blocks (associated with "LBAs", or "Logical Block Addresses") of data are read. The frequency at which scatter/gather list 26 is consulted may vary depending upon the size of the blocks of data. However, the frequency is  
10 such that DMA engine 16 consults scatter/gather list 26 at (or substantially near) a boundary between the demand and prefetch data (as that data is read).

An entry (or entries), such as a flag, is provided in scatter/gather list 26 at the boundary between entries  
15 relating to the demand data and those relating to the prefetch data. As DMA engine 16 finishes with the demand data, it encounters this entry in scatter/gather list 26. When it encounters this entry, DMA engine 16 issues (204) an interrupt to signal the boundary between the demand and  
20 prefetch data. The interrupt is provided to device driver 15 which, in response, informs other processes (not shown) executing on host processing device 11 that the demand data has been read/stored. The demand data can then be processed

or transmitted by these other processes, while DMA engine 16 continues to read (205) prefetch data 25.

By using a DMA-generated interrupt as set forth above, it is possible to read demand and prefetch data in 5 response to a single command from device driver 15, and then to process the demand data while the prefetch data is still being read. Thus, process 19 reduces command overhead without sacrificing inherent advantages of obtaining prefetch data.

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10 Reading Preceding Prefetch Data

In Fig. 4, an alternative process 30 is shown for reading data from hard disk 12. Process 30 uses device driver 15 and DMA engine 16 to control reading from hard disk 12. Controlling reading directly from host processing 15 device 11 brings to bear additional resources, such as processing power and memory, that are not otherwise available during reading. This is because processors in the host processing device generally operate at greater speeds, and have access to more available memory, than typical 20 controllers which reside in, and control the operation of, disk drives. As a result, relatively large amounts of prefetch data can be read and stored using process 30.

Device driver 15 receives (401) a command from another computer program (for example, an application program running on host processing device 11). The command requests (demand) data from a specific location on hard disk

- 5 12. In response to the command, device driver 15 reads (402) data 31 that precedes the demand data 24 in a direction of motion of hard disk 12 (see Fig. 5). This "preceding" prefetch data 31 may be adjacent to demand data 24, as shown in Fig. 5, or it may be located at some other
- 10 prior point relative to the demand data on hard disk 12.

Generally speaking, it does not take additional time to read data 31, since the location of demand data 24 is moved to transducer head 22 anyway to read demand data 24.

While hard disk 12 is being moved into position, transducer head 22 will pass over data 31, during which time transducer head 22 reads that data. The data is stored (403) in memory 17 (or otherwise processed) on host processing device 11.

Storage is performed via DMA engine 16 and scatter/gather list 26, as described above.

- 20 Process 30 meanwhile reads (404) demand data 24 from hard disk 12 in response to the same command received in 401. Thus, a single command can be used to both prefetch and demand data. Process 30 may also read prefetch data that follows the demand data in a direction of motion of

hard disk 12. Process 19 may be used to read this prefetch data, or the data may be read using host processing device 11. Process 30 may be repeated for plural sectors of hard disk 12 and for plural entries of the scatter/gather list.

5 Hardware

Hardware on which processes 19 and 30 may be implemented is shown in Fig. 6. Personal computer ("PC") 32 includes disk drive 14 which reads and writes data on a hard disk, a display screen 34 which displays information to a user, and input devices 35 which input data. A controller 36 (Fig. 7) in PC 32 runs device driver 15 and DMA engine 16 using scatter/gather list 26 (stored in memory 17) and functions as the host processing device.

Fig. 7 also shows components of disk drive 14.

15 Among these components are hard disk 12, transducer head 22, pre-amplifier 37, analog variable gain amplifier ("VGA") 39, filter 40, analog-to-digital ("A/D") converter 41, controller 42 (including memory 27), and writer 45.

Hard disk 12 is a magnetic disk having concentric 20 data storage channels defined on each of its storage surfaces. Hard disk 12 is rotated inside disk drive 14 while data is read from/written to its channels. Although

only one hard disk 12 is shown, more than one disk may be included in disk drive 14.

Transducer head 22 is a magneto-resistive head (or similar device) that is capable of reading data from, and 5 writing data to, hard disk 12. Transducer head 22 is associated in a "flying" relationship over a storage surface of hard disk 12, meaning that it is movable relative to, and over, the storage surface in order to read and write data.

To read data from hard disk 12, device driver 15 10 (executing in controller 42) sends a signal to transducer head 22 to move transducer head 22 to locations on hard disk 12 from which data is to be read (process 19).

Transducer head 22 senses flux transitions as it "flies" in close proximity to a specified location on hard 15 disk 12. These flux transitions 50 are provided to pre-amplifier 37. Pre-amplifier 37 is a voltage pre-amplifier that amplifies the flux transitions from millivolts (mV) to volts (V). The resulting pre-amplified analog signal (or "read" signal) 51 is provided to VGA 39. VGA 39 further 20 amplifies read signal 51 and provides a resulting amplified read signal 52 to filter 40.

Filter 40 is an analog filter/equalizer that generates a substantially square wave from amplified read signal 52. To this end, filter 40 is programmed in

accordance with the data transfer rate of a data zone on hard disk 12 from which signal 52 ultimately originated. Resulting filtered signal 54 is subjected to sampling and quantization within high-speed A/D converter 41. A/D converter 41 outputs digital data 55 generated from signal 54. Data 55 corresponds to the data stored on hard disk 12.

Writer 45 is provided for writing data to hard disk 12 (via transducer head 22). Memory 27 stores computer instructions (including firmware for device driver 15) for implementing process 19. Memory 27 also stores scatter/gather list 26.

Processes 19 and 30 are not limited to use with this foregoing hardware and software configurations; they may find applicability in any computing or processing environment. Processes 19 and 30 may be implemented in hardware, software, or a combination of the two. Processes 19 and 30 may be implemented in computer programs executing on programmable computers that each include a processor, a storage medium readable by the processor (including volatile and non-volatile memory and/or storage elements), at least one input device, and one or more output devices.

Each such program may be implemented in a high level procedural or object-oriented programming language to communicate with a computer system. However, the programs

can be implemented in assembly or machine language. The language may be a compiled or an interpreted language.

Each computer program may be stored on a storage medium or device (e.g., hard disk or magnetic diskette) that  
5 is readable by a general or special purpose programmable computer for configuring and operating the computer when the storage medium or device is read by the computer to perform processes 19 and 30. Processes 19 and 30 may also be implemented as a computer-readable storage medium,  
10 configured with a computer program, where, upon execution, instructions in the computer program cause the computer to operate in accordance with processes 19 and 30.

Other embodiments not specifically described herein are also within the scope of the following claims. For  
15 example, features of processes 19 and 30 can be combined in a single embodiment. Additional entries may be added to scatter/gather list 26 to cause DMA engine 16 to issue additional interrupts. Processes 19 and 30 can be used to access data stored on other storage media, including optical  
20 media, such as CDs ("Compact Disks"), DVDs ("Digital Video Disks"), and DLT ("Digital Linear Tape"). Device driver 15 may be an ATA ("Advanced Technology Attachment") driver. Processes 19 and 30 may be executed in a different order from that shown and/or one or more steps thereof may be

executed concurrently. The invention may be used with other storage media, such as optical disk drives and magnetic recording devices.

What is claimed is:

1. A method of reading data from a storage medium,  
comprising:

reading data on the storage medium in response to a  
command;

5           storing the data in a region of memory; and  
             issuing an interrupt after a predetermined portion  
of the data has been stored in memory.

2. The method of claim 1, further comprising  
consulting a database to determine when to issue the  
10 interrupt.

3. The method of claim 2, wherein the database  
comprises instructions for storing the data and for issuing  
the interrupt.

4. The method of claim 2, wherein the database  
15 comprises a scatter/gather list.

5. The method of claim 1, wherein the predetermined  
portion of data is read from a first location on the storage  
medium and additional data is read from a second location on  
the storage medium, the first location preceding the second

location in a direction of movement of the storage medium during reading.

6. The method of claim 6, further comprising  
reading data from a third location on the storage medium in  
5 response to the command, the third location preceding the  
first and second locations in a direction of movement of the  
storage medium during reading.

7. A method by which a host processing device reads  
data from a storage medium of a disk drive, comprising:

10 reading data from a first location on the storage  
medium in response to a command requesting data at a second  
location on the storage medium; and  
reading data from the second location on the storage  
medium in response to the command, the first location  
15 preceding the second location in a direction of movement of  
the storage medium during reading.

8. The method of claim 7, wherein the first  
location is adjacent to the second location.

9. The method of claim 7, further comprising  
20 reading data from a third location on the storage medium in

response to the command, the third location following the second location in the direction of movement of the storage medium during reading.

10. The method of claim 9, wherein the third  
5 location is adjacent to the second location.

11. The method of claim 7, further comprising receiving the command from a computer program executing on the host processing device.

12. The method of claim 7, further comprising  
10 storing data read from the first and second locations in a memory on the host processing device.

13. A computer program stored on a computer-readable medium for reading data from a storage medium, the computer program comprising instructions that cause a  
15 computer to:

read data on the storage medium in response to a command;

store the data in a region of memory; and  
issue an interrupt after a predetermined portion of  
20 the data has been stored in memory.

14. The computer program of claim 13, further comprising instructions that cause the computer to consult a database to determine when to issue the interrupt.

15. The computer program of claim 14, wherein the  
5 database comprises instructions for storing the data and for issuing the interrupt.

16. The computer program of claim 14, wherein the database comprises a scatter/gather list.

17. The computer program of claim 13, wherein the  
10 predetermined portion of the data is read from a first location on the storage medium and additional data is read from a second location on the storage medium, the first location preceding the second location in a direction of movement of the storage medium during reading.

15           18. The computer program of claim 17, further comprising instructions that cause the computer to read data from a third location on the storage medium in response to the command, the third location preceding the first and second locations in a direction of movement of the storage  
20 medium during reading.

19. A computer program stored on a computer-readable medium which causes a host processing device to read data from a storage medium of a disk drive, the computer program comprising instructions that cause the host processing device to:

read data from a first location on the storage medium in response to a command requesting data at a second location on the storage medium; and

read data from the second location on the storage

10 medium in response to the command, the first location preceding the second location in a direction of movement of the storage medium during reading.

20. The computer program of claim 19, wherein the first location is adjacent to the second location.

15 21. The computer program of claim 19, further comprising instruction that cause the host processing device to read data from a third location on the storage medium in response to the command, the third location following the second location in the direction of movement of the storage  
20 medium during reading.

22. The computer program of claim 21, wherein the third location is adjacent to the second location.

23. The computer program of claim 19, further comprising instructions that cause the host processing device to receive the command from a computer program executing on the host processing device.

24. The computer program of claim 19, further comprising instructions that cause the host processing device to store data read from the first and second locations in a memory on the host processing device.

25. An apparatus for reading data from a storage medium, comprising:  
a memory which stores computer instructions; and  
a processor which executes the computer instructions  
15 to (i) read data on the storage medium in response to a command, (ii) store the data in a region of memory, and (iii) issue an interrupt after a predetermined portion of the data has been stored in memory.

26. The apparatus of claim 25, wherein the processor executes computer instructions to consult a database to determine when to issue the interrupt.

27. The apparatus of claim 26, wherein the database  
5 comprises instructions for storing the data and for issuing the interrupt.

28. The apparatus of claim 25, wherein the predetermined portion of data is read from a first location on the storage medium and additional data is read from a  
10 second location on the storage medium, the first location preceding the second location in a direction of movement of the storage medium during reading.

29. An apparatus for reading data from a storage medium of a disk drive, comprising:

15 a memory which stores computer instructions; and a processor which executes the computer instructions to (i) read data from a first location on the storage medium in response to a command requesting data at a second location on the storage medium, and (ii) read data from the  
20 second location on the storage medium in response to the command, the first location preceding the second location in

a direction of movement of the storage medium during reading.

30. The apparatus of claim 29, wherein the first location is adjacent to the second location.

GRIFFIN DOUGLAS DEPARTMENT OF PATENTS

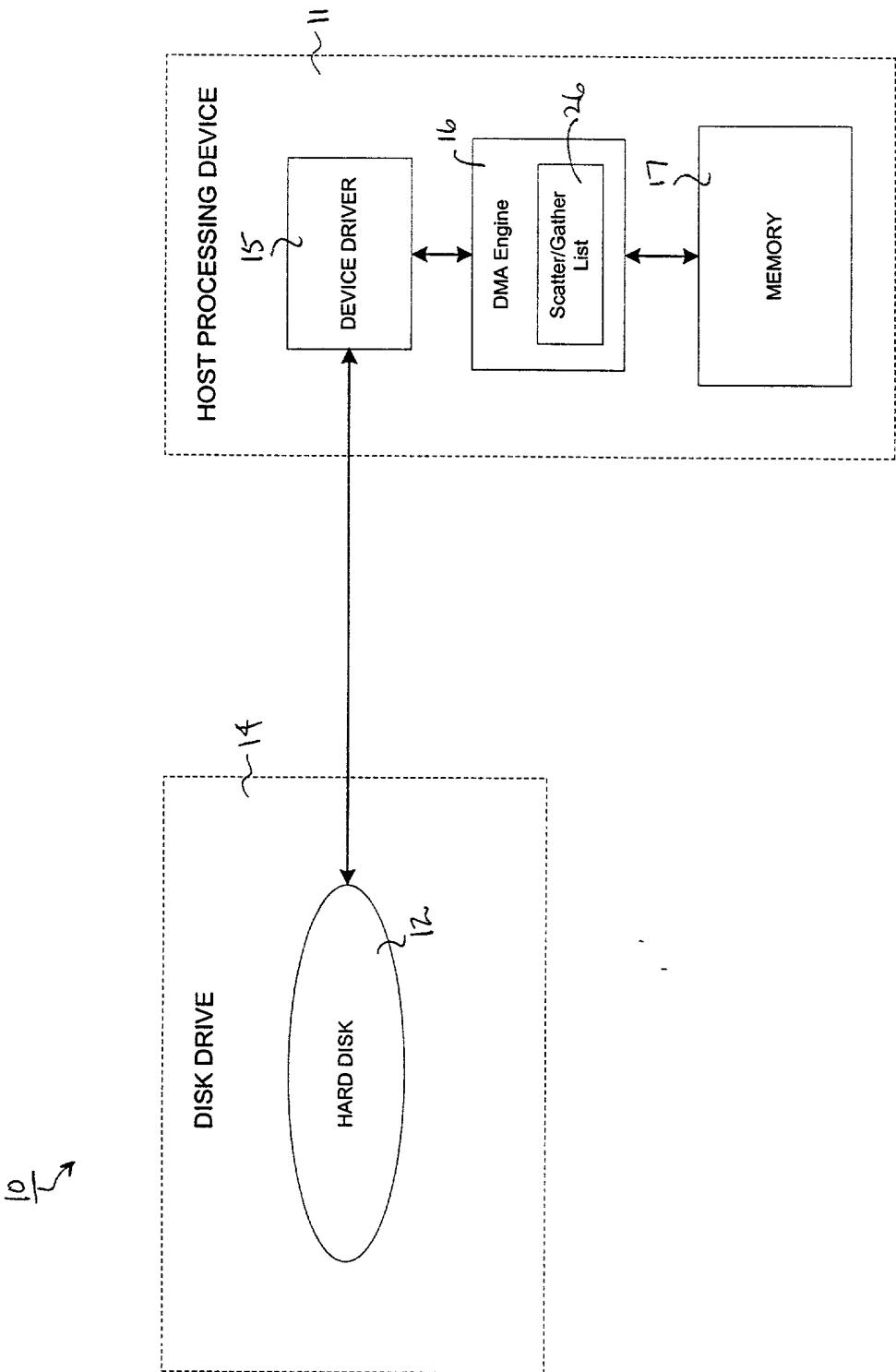
READING DATA FROM A STORAGE MEDIUM

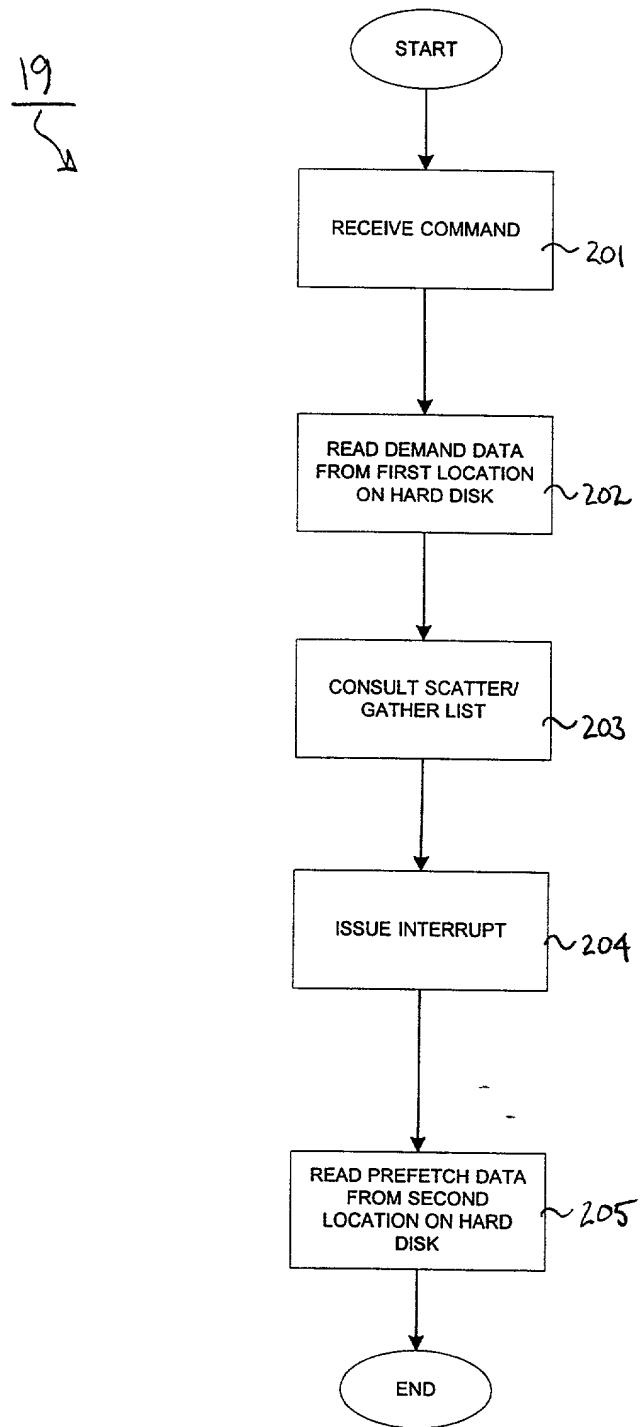
Abstract of the Disclosure

Data is read from a storage medium in response to a command and stored in a region of memory. An interrupt is issued after a predetermined portion of the data has been stored in memory. A database, such as a scatter/gather list, may be consulted to determine when to issue the interrupt. A host processing device may read data from a first location on the storage medium in response to a command requesting data at a second location on the storage medium, and may read data from the second location on the storage medium in response to the command. The first location precedes the second location in a direction of movement of the storage medium during reading.

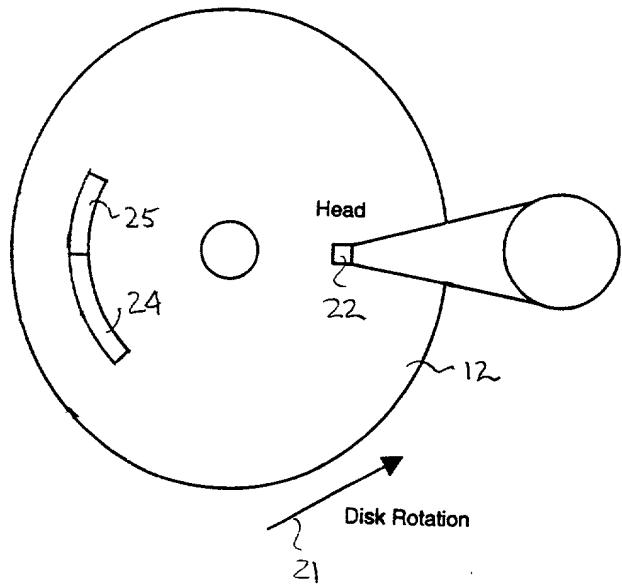
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**FIG. 1**

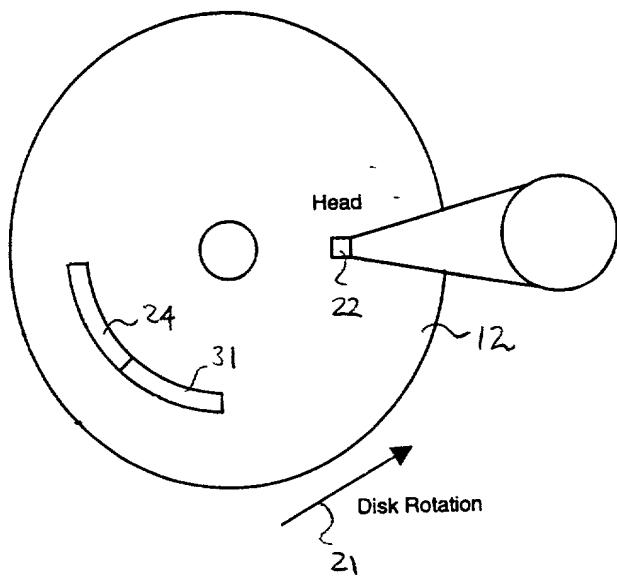




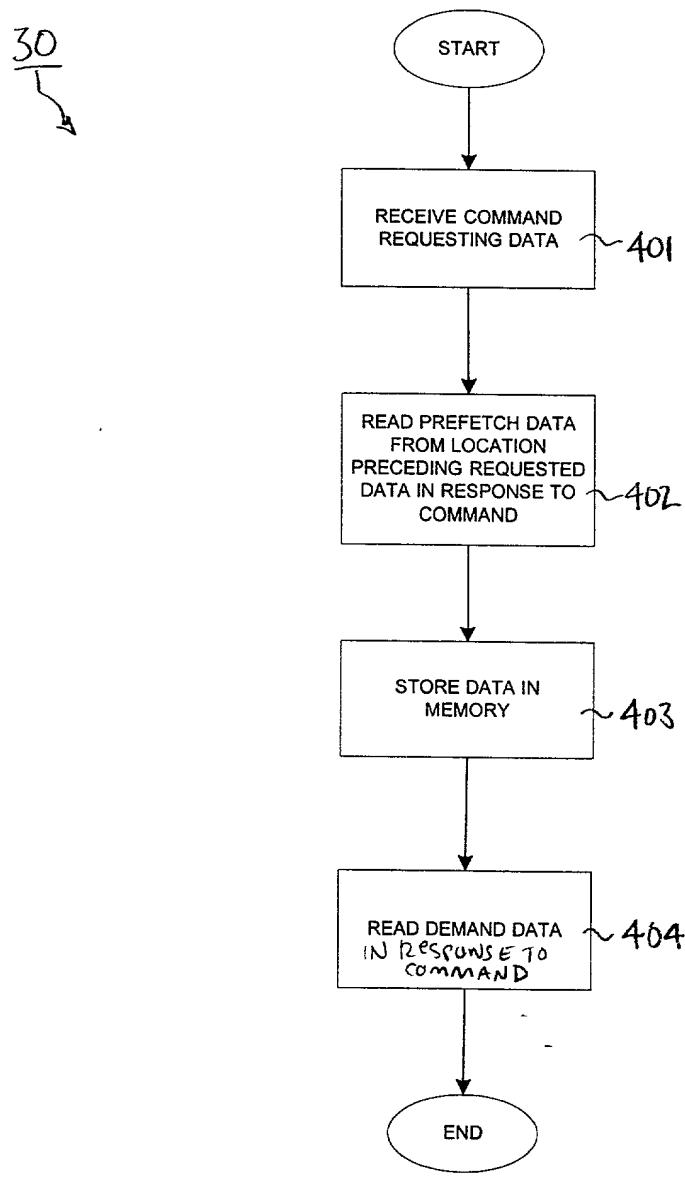
**FIG. 2**



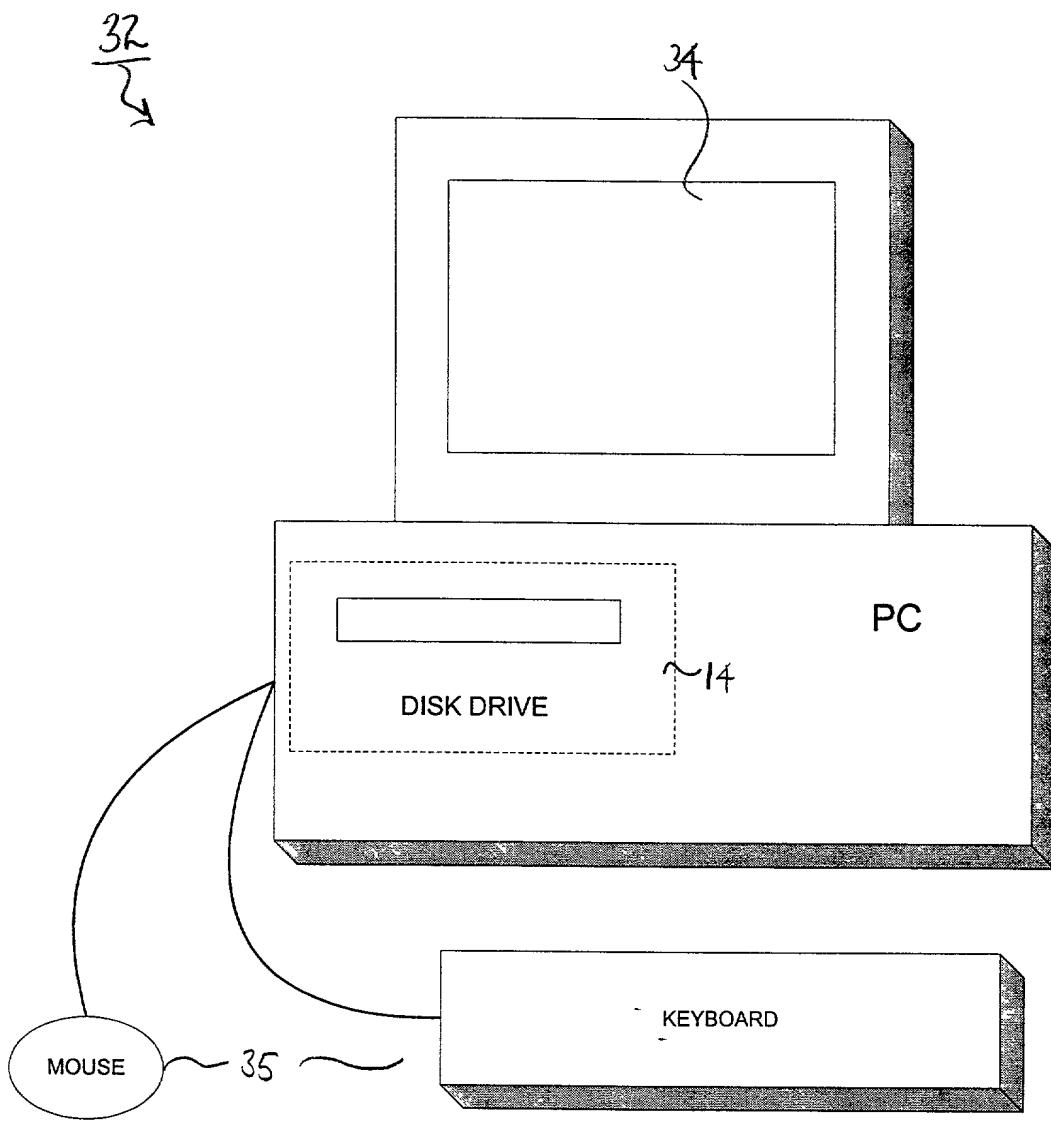
**FIG. 3**



**FIG. 5**

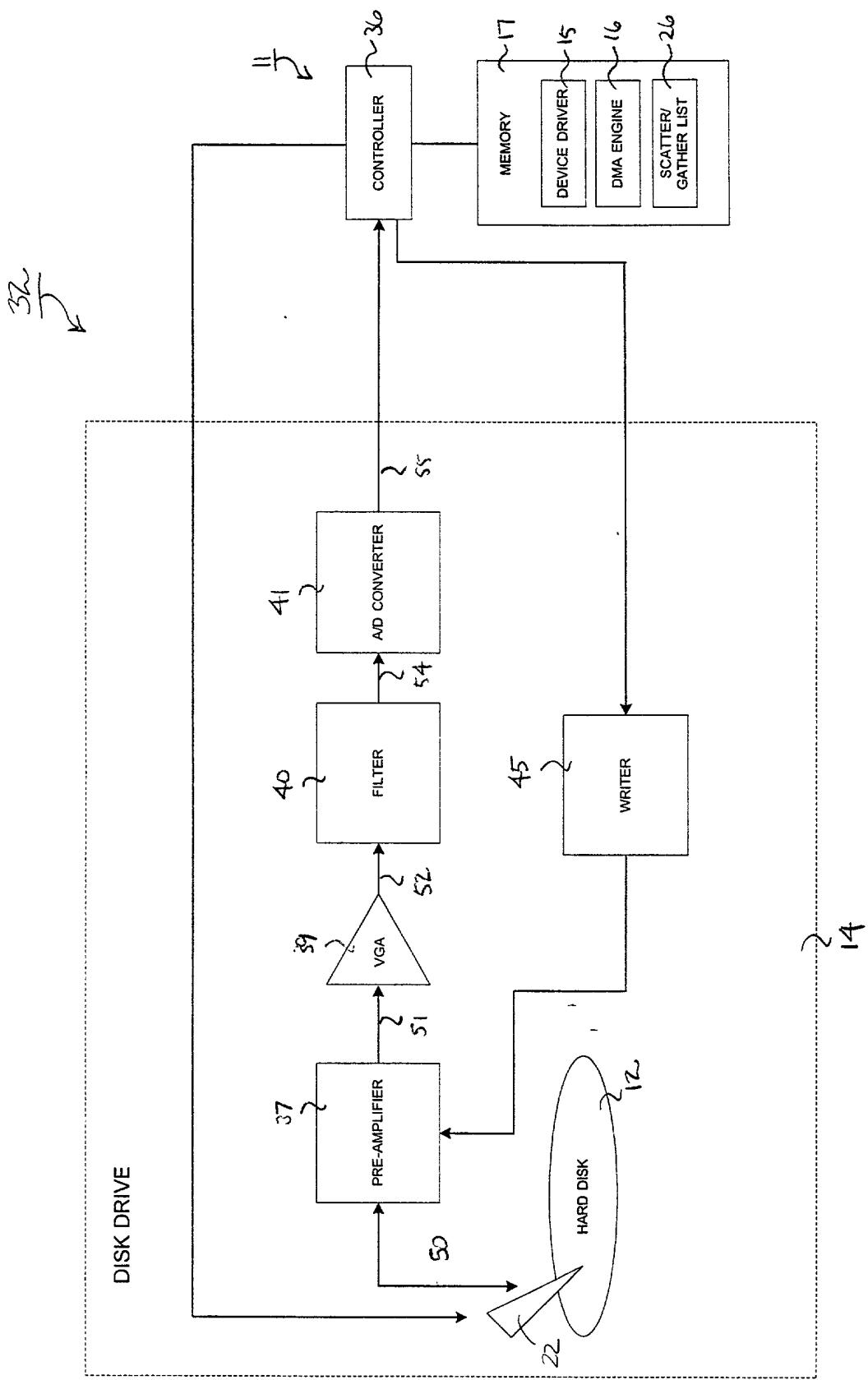


**FIG. 4**



**FIG. 6**

**FIG. 7**



## COMBINED DECLARATION AND POWER OF ATTORNEY

As a below named inventor, I hereby declare that:

My residence, post office address and citizenship are as stated below next to my name,

I believe I am the original, first and sole inventor (if only one name is listed below) or an original, first and joint inventor (if plural names are listed below) of the subject matter which is claimed and for which a patent is sought on the invention entitled READING DATA FROM A STORAGE MEDIUM, the specification of which:

- is attached hereto.
- was filed on \_\_\_\_\_ as Application Serial No. \_\_\_\_\_ and was amended on \_\_\_\_\_.
- was described and claimed in PCT International Application No. \_\_\_\_\_ filed on \_\_\_\_\_ and as amended under PCT Article 19 on \_\_\_\_\_.

I hereby state that I have reviewed and understand the contents of the above-identified specification, including the claims, as amended by any amendment referred to above.

I acknowledge the duty to disclose all information I know to be material to patentability in accordance with Title 37, Code of Federal Regulations, §1.56.

I hereby claim the benefit under Title 35, United States Code, §119(e)(1) of any United States provisional application(s) listed below:

U.S. Serial No.	Filing Date	Status
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I hereby claim the benefit under Title 35, United States Code, §120 of any United States application(s) listed below and, insofar as the subject matter of each of the claims of this application is not disclosed in the prior United States application in the manner provided by the first paragraph of Title 35, United States Code, §112, I acknowledge the duty to disclose all information I know to be material to patentability as defined in Title 37, Code of Federal Regulations, § 1.56(a) which became available between the filing date of the prior application and the national or PCT international filing date of this application:

U.S. Serial No.	Filing Date	Status
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I hereby claim foreign priority benefits under Title 35, United States Code, §119 of any foreign application(s) for patent or inventor's certificate or of any PCT international application(s) designating at least one country other than the United States of America listed below and have also identified below any foreign application for patent or inventor's certificate or any PCT international application(s) designating at least one country other than the United States of America filed by me on the same subject matter having a filing date before that of the application(s) of which priority is claimed:

Country	Application No.	Filing Date	Priority Claimed
			<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No
			<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No

**Combined Declaration and Power of Attorney**

Page 2 of 3 Pages

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I hereby declare that all statements made herein of my own knowledge are true and that all statements made on information and belief are believed to be true; and further that these statements were made with the knowledge that willful false statements and the like so made are punishable by fine or imprisonment, or both, under Section 1001 of Title 18 of the United States Code and that such willful false statements may jeopardize the validity of the application or any patents issued thereon.

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